

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NOUAKC 02902 160845Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MCE-00 ACDA-12
/109 W

-----069142 161938Z /44

R 151620Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8593
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGEIRS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION USUN NY
CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 2902

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, SS, MR, SG, MO, AG, SA
SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: POLISARIO AGAIN ATTACK ZOUERATE-NOUADHIBOU

REF: (A) NOUAKCHOTT 2863, (B) NOUAKCHOTT 2841, (C) NOUAKCHOTT 2815

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED NEWSPAPER CHAAB
UNDER HEADLINE "41 DEAD AMONG MERCENARIES WHO ATTACKED MINERAL
TRAIN MONDAY", REPORTS DETAILS OF DECEMBER 12 POLISARIO ATTACK
ON ZOUERATE"NOUADHIBOU RAIL LINE. ACCORDING TO CHAAB, ATTACK
FORCE OF 60 VEHICLES HIT LOADED IRON ORE TRAIN 100 KILO-
METERS SOUTH OF ZOUERATE, TOOK FIVE CIVILIAN HOSTAGES AND
DAMAGED ONE ENGINE AND TWO FREIGHT CARS. THE FIVE CIVILIAN
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HOSTAGES WERE SUBSEQUENTLY RESCUED BY MAURITANIAN (GIRM) FORCE
WHICH PURSUED ENEMY, ASSISTED BY AIR SUPPORT FROM T-6'S AND
DEFENDERS. IN BATTLE AT TOURINE (22 30N, 11 53W) CHAAB REPORTS
THAT 41 MERCENARIES KILLED, 15 ENEMY VEHICLES ABANDONED, AND
ASSORTED ARTILLERY CAPTURED INCLUDING 20 MM, TWIN-TUBED 23 WM,
AND 75 MM PIECES. TOTAL GIRM LOSSES LISTED AS 17 DEAD, 4
INJURED. ARTICLE EMPHASIZED THAT NORMAL RAIL OPERATIONS CON-

TINE AND CONCLUDES BY NOTING THAT ENEMY IS PRESENTLY ENCIRCLED
200 KILOMETERS FROM ATTACK SITE. END UNCLASSIFIED

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: ACCORDING TO AFP REP, THREE ENGINES
WERE DAMAGED (ONE EXTENSIVELY AND TWO LIGHTLY) IN ATTACK.
HIS SOURCES SUGGEST THAT GIRM FORCES RESPONDED WELL
TO ATTACK AND THAT, IN FACT, IRON ORE TRAIN IS CONTINUING TO
OPERATE ON A REGULAR BASIS.

3. COMMENT: GIRM CASUALTY FIGURES ARE OBVIOUSLY PRELIMINARY
AND WE BELIEVE PROBABLY UNDERSTATED. ALTHOUGH GIRM LOSSES
IN DECEMBER 2 ATTACK ON BOULANOUAR (REF C) WERE ANNOUNCED
AS 8 WOUNDED, LOCAL COMMENTS SUGGEST THAT BATTLE WAS LARGER THAN
REPORTED. ONE STORY CIRCULATING LISTS GIRM LOSES AT 10 KILLED,
10 WOUNDED, 9 VEHICLES AND 30 MAURITANIANS CAPTURED.
(EMBOFF SPOKE WITH FAMILY OF ONE PROMINENT MAURITANIAN WHOSE
SON KILLED IN BOULANOUAR ATTACK). AIR SUPPORT PROBABLY CON-
SISTS LARGELY OF MOROCCAN T-6'S BASED IN DAKHLA AS LARGE PART
GIRM AIR FORCE INOPERATIVE (REF A). POLISARIO UNITS CAN
EVIDENTLY ORGANIZE STRIKE FORCES IN AREA SURROUNDING RAIL LINE;
WHETHER GIRM CAN REPULSE ATTACKS BEFORE HEAVY DAMAGE DONE
AND INFLICT CASUALTIES ON WITHDRAWING FORCES REMAINS TO
BE SEEN. END CONFIDENTIAL.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
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